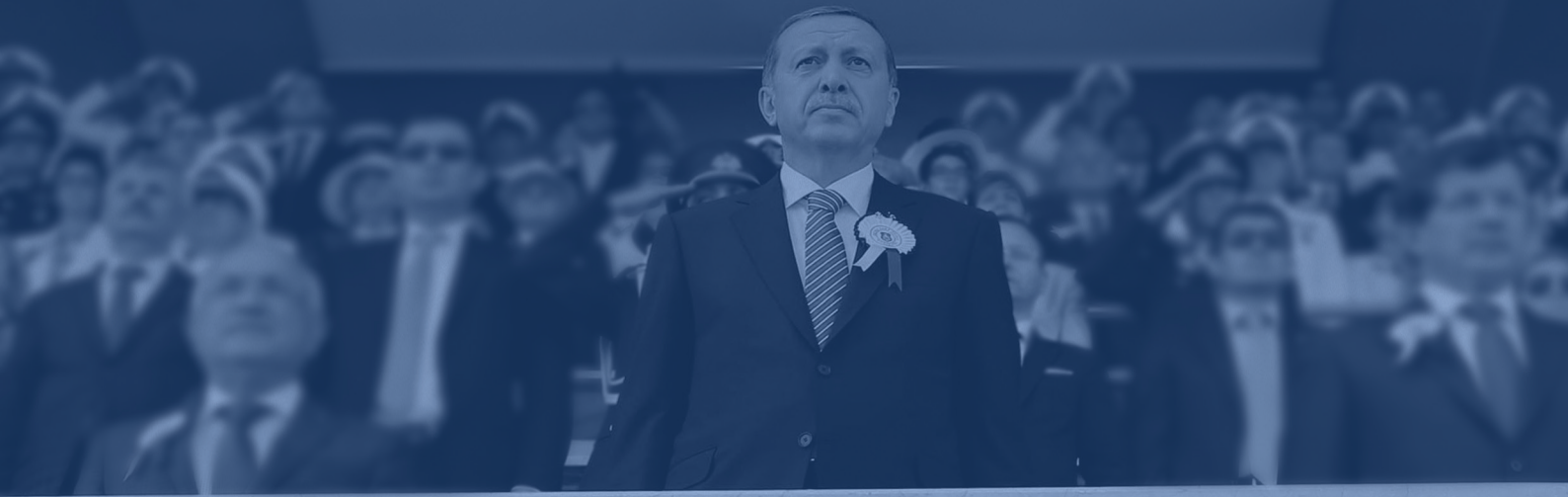


ANALYSIS

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ERDOĞAN'S POLITICS AND HIS PRESIDENTIAL MISSION

NEBİ MİŞ • ALİ ASLAN



SETA



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ABSTRACT

If we take a look at the collapse of the Western-centered world in the 1990s one can see the preceding 1945 period and onward as a sign of modern liberal political crisis wrapped around a capitalist versus communist strife which as a result created fault lines in the political atmosphere. The trauma that emerged within the groundwork of modern Turkey in its early days was so engrained that it created many political crises. To this extent the structural breaking points that were experienced in the transitional periods this opportunity laid the foundation for reformist political actors to emerge in the political scene.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was one of the reformist political actors that emerged with breakthrough developmental policies which quickly brought him to the position of one of the most influential leaders to have ever come in the history of modern Turkey. What makes him such an important figure is the fact that he played a major role during the time when Turkey was experiencing a major political crisis and Erdoğan was able to respond with a great restoration plan. This picture reveals that the political role played by Erdoğan is reconstructing the political order in the country.

Erdoğan's leadership within the restoration period represents the struggle with a tutelage regime from the past and on the other hand there is a struggle to rebuild institutions from within politics. As a result of Erdoğan's struggle we witness a centralization of government that is different in the sense that the people and state are brought together on a single platform which has rendered a new path towards democratization. In the same vein, the economic progress made much improvement along the lines towards better development. In tandem to these domestic improvements in Turkey, the country was ushered into the center of international arena as an active player in the field.

Erdoğan's "constructivist" approach to executive power in the presidency will allow new institutions to be established. The "New Turkey" project that is at the center of Erdoğan's reform is comprised of three factors: independence, democracy and development. The two goals aimed at improving the society and its institutions include local values being used to reform and rebuild society from within. At the same time, in order to achieve a democratic pluralist citizenry, it is also necessary for the reformed society to pursue a rectified political agency. These two objectives are inseparable from one another.

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INTRODUCTION

The end of Cold War affected many indicative structures in the Turkish nation. Old actors and their organizations during this time lost their legitimacy and immediately became marginalized. In consequence of this lack of legitimacy, this resulted in a vacuum where a government capacity almost became non-existent. This situation of Turkey demanded an even more need for an extensive transition and restoration period. This process, however, requires political-societal phenomenon to be re-defined and at the same time, set a new trend in the political arena. This need stems from the necessity for new political discourse and how to put it into action. It is in this particular time that Erdoğan's leadership soared and became a key political figure at a time of perplexed political atmosphere.

Erdoğan's politics can only be understood in relation to these extraordinary structural changes and transformations. This period was engulfed on one side by newly emerging political figures while on the other political actors sometimes had to take on new roles. For Erdoğan, he had two tasks on his hands. One is AK Party's role as a new player in the field that had to tackle the

old vanguard regime and its resistant actors. And secondly, he had the task of rebuilding institutions and reforming the system from within. As a result he was able to stand as a successful leader and as long as he stood for the amount of time he did, Erdoğan has certainly earned the seat of most powerful politician in the political arena. In other words, in the post-Cold War period the global and regional areas went through a structural glide and this is precisely where Erdoğan's activism as a keen politician set forth his reformist plan. His idea was to put forth the local vision to the front while at the same time taking his outward-looking foreign policy approach and putting them both into practice. These two dimensions of Erdoğan's approach outpoured his "constructive politics" in the many years that came afterwards.

In retrospect of Turkey's political history, Erdoğan's election to the presidential office marks a special note on the basis that he has been in government for more than a decade. In this analysis, you will first come across how Erdoğan formed the political inheritance he leaves behind, contextualized through a focus on his political career stretching from his time as the mayor of Istanbul to his current presidency. With this the analysis we will undertake the task of setting out a typology of past presidents and in tandem to answering the questions of Erdoğan's presidency we will try to answer what kind of a president he will be and what his vision for New Turkey is.

In the following analysis we took the following steps. First, Erdoğan's politics and his goal towards realizing the reform project is examined and analyzed. Second, Erdoğan's presidential candidacy and his strategy throughout the campaign and election period is considered. Third, by analyzing the previous presidents, we will take a look at the kind of president Erdoğan is likely to be. And finally we will observe the New Turkey project which will be outlined by

Erdoğan's presidency; we will discuss how this new project will ensue and the challenges it may face along the way.

ERDOĞAN'S POLITICS AND TURKEY'S RESTORATION

In Erdoğan's 12 year political experience in the government his leadership led to a new paradigm effect as opposed to previous government leaders who held a passive position and chose to not challenge the status quo. Erdoğan's approach to resolving the chronic state of Turkish politics was through putting forth structural and sound resolutions while at the same time he managed to radically change the international stance of Turkey on the global platform. Turkey's economic growth under the Erdoğan government also enabled new policies which carried the nation on to the international platform as a respected actor in the international political scene. As a leader who transmitted all his energy towards the consolidation of democracy and the restructuring of domestic politics and its institutions Erdoğan aimed to achieve several goals. Among the major issues which he tackled in a decade include civil-military relations, Kurdish question, religion and state relations all of which are big milestones achieved in the history of Turkey's two-hundred year restoration period. Erdoğan's political role can be understood by evaluating what he has achieved both in domestic and international politics.

Erdoğan's Mayoral Leadership

Erdoğan's political success story can be traced to his first leadership as Mayor of Greater Istanbul Municipality where he set the trend for a new political style. This period during his post as mayor allowed his approach to political dynamism and how to build his leadership structure from

previous experiences in the field. In this vein, Erdoğan's mayorship places him in a unique position based on two points. One of these is the way in which Erdoğan's election campaign used to garner votes through his way of "political communication style." And secondly, after his election Erdoğan's approach to running the municipality through his own style of "management understanding and Project-based strategy."

Despite Erdoğan's active and effective role in the Welfare Party he was only limited to the position of leading as a provincial representative. Nevertheless, in the 1994 elections Erdoğan won by a landslide of 25.2 % and rose to his new position as the Mayor of Greater Municipality of Istanbul. Erdoğan's popularity soon rose to a new height in the political scene as one of the most well-known politicians which made him the most debated and effective political figure.¹

The main factor in Erdoğan's success is his reach out to middle and low income class as his target audience in the Istanbul borough. Erdoğan's goal of reaching this new audience in the city of Istanbul enabled a new communication trend between the popular mayor and the lower income class. This new strategy was about going directly to the door of voters and speaking to them and discussing about their demands and grievances. He achieved his face to face direct communication by also discussing with the voters about projects for the city and its inhabitants. This approach put Erdoğan up the ladder compared to his competitors. He achieved success through his dialogue with not only marginalized communities but also reached out beyond to other regions to garner as much vote possible.

There was one more addition to Erdoğan's new approach of communication strategy and

¹ Nebi Miş and Abdullah Eren, "Siyasal Partilerin Yerel Vizyonu: İstanbul Seçimleri", *SETA Analysis no.91* (March 2014), p.16-20

this was the inclusion of women in the campaign process. It is widely known that the Welfare Party's popularity was boosted by major work done by women. This was especially important in the rise of women's role in politics across the nation. Thus, women (in the Welfare Party) were able to mobilize and show performance through debating national issues and opting for their rights alongside their male colleagues. This advancement changed women's role in Turkish politics and widened the opportunity for women to participate in all spheres of socio-political and economic spheres in the country.²

In this way for the first time, women became active in the political sphere by organizing and found the opportunity to open a political space for themselves where they could discuss the country's problems while protecting their own rights and debating their place in society.³ Erdoğan attributes his political communication method to his work in Beyoğlu during 1989 local elections: "...the first departure was the involvement of women in active politics for the first time in the Beyoğlu elections with our party. This was very meaningful and they worked intensely alongside us. We went through everywhere in Beyoğlu, including even the taverns on İstiklal Avenue."⁴

Erdoğan's mayorship period saw a "Management style and Project-based leadership" which allowed his approach to evolve into a "National Outlook mayorship" become a brand in the political scene. As a new mayor in Office, Erdoğan was faced with the task of tackling the issues that were waiting for him. In resolving the issues, Erdoğan was wise to pinpoint the issues and created a strategy to resolve the problems in projects that were presented to the

general public. Some of the responses he had in hand especially in his explanations to the public, Erdoğan was already presenting his successful approach early on in his career. In a speech he gave, Erdoğan said the following: "We must work hand in hand together for this ship to sail. The spark in our victory is due to us not being conceited nor arrogant. We came to the position that we did by the strength of our hard work. I wore a shirt made of fire. I have been entrusted by the 10 million votes I received. If I don't hold on tight to what I have been entrusted then I am doomed to history judging me."⁵

Due to Erdoğan being overwhelmed with all the new projects he must implement in order to fix the previous disasters made in the mayorship, the new mayor chose to establish a quick way to get all the tasks done through a "consultation mechanism" and would later on create an "advisory board" which will serve again in Erdoğan's future political position as Prime Minister. At the same time for issues regarding infrastructure and transportation Erdoğan chose academics and experts to delegate duties that requires expertise. In addition to the educational workshops provided by Erdoğan to the Greater Municipality and district municipality employees courses such as city-planning, regional planning courses, infrastructure engineering, local management history, aesthetics, art history and environment protection were offered.

One of the new policies brought by Erdoğan to the Municipality was that there will no longer be a top-down approach but rather there would be a vocal people-to-people interactive method in the way projects are planned and implemented.⁶ Accordingly, Erdoğan built a system in which citizens have the right to demand new services and provide criticism to projects under the

2 Hüseyin Besli and Ömer Özbay, *Bir Liderin Doğulu Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*, (Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, İstanbul: 2014), p. 64.

3 Metin Heper and Şule Toktaş; "Islam, Modernity, and Democracy in Contemporary Turkey: The Case of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan", *The Muslim World*, c. 93, no. 2 (April 2003), p. 157-185.

4 Özköylü, G. "Kasımpaşalı Tayyip, Nasıl Tayyip Erdoğan Oldu", *Hürriyet*, 27 February 2009.

5 Ruşen Çakır and Fehmi Çalmuk, 1980 Sonrası İslami Hareket: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, *Bir Dönmüşümün Öyküsü*, (Metis, İstanbul: 2001) p.63.

6 Metin Heper, Şule Toktaş; "Islam, Modernity and Democracy in Contemporary Turkey: The Case of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan", *The Muslim World*, c.93, no.2 (Nisan 2003), p.157-185.

“White Table” consultation line for people to call in. And thus for the first time in the history of a municipality, those who are in management and the voters who are the citizens can have a direct dialogue in which feedback and criticism could be made. Almost every week surveys would be conducted to make sure voters are content with how management is functioning and whether demands are being met.

Constructivist Leadership and AK Party

The political result of the struggle that Erdoğan led against “reactionism”-themed campaigns which began prior to and continued through his mayorship was the establishment of the AK Party. According to Erdoğan, the only response that could be given to the “Second Independence War”⁷ being conducted in an “all out” manner against the societal and political movement he comes from was through a new political structure, method, and understanding. Accordingly, Welfare Party’s administration team response to the February 28 coup was found to be “naïve” and did not bolster enough support from the party leaders and therefore were left with the only choice of garnering support from the Anatolian people. Due to the poem he recited in a Siirt meeting, Erdoğan was prosecuted for his “crusader-like” character. At the time he knew that the country was going through a period of military pressure and his political party had become quite due to distress alongside Imam Hatip schools not receiving the recognition they deserved from the state. Erdoğan’s political strategy in the face of these challenges was to procure an effective reaction plan to these injustices by incorporating the large masses of public support. When April 27 e-coup occurred, Erdoğan and

his team were prepared to make the right announcements to thwart off once again another military tutelage.

Erdoğan’s every step towards a successful political career adds to the political roadmap as an experienced individual in the field. As someone who has overachieved the challenges during his mayorship period, Erdoğan’s ambition led to the founding of AK Party. In a Virtue Party group meeting that had the framework of traditionalist vs. renewalists Abdullah Gül spoke the following words: “Why should we not govern our party the way we governed our municipalities.”⁸ The newly formed AK Party in one way or another was going to resemble the making of an Islamic movement that would offer a new political approach to a restoration plan. And thus, according to Erdoğan an Islamic movement in Turkey not only needed to be a structure that is there but also it should have a political nuance to its renewalist approach as well. It was seen that the 1990s political crisis period which burgeoned polarization and conflict within the state could only be resolved through a democratic political management.

The fundamental factor of Erdoğan’s success is his contact with the mid- to low-wage new urbanites with whom no other party was able to penetrate.

The newly founded AK Party was going to be far from polarization and conflict and instead its groundwork will be based on a “collective” political platform.⁹ Aside from law and voter demands no tolerance would be given for party

⁷ The circles who were uneasy with the rise of the Refah Party published a notice called “The footsteps of darkness” where they defended the fact that foreign capital would desert the country in the current conditions. As a matter of fact, more than 40 associations who said they were beginning the “Second Independence War” were established just in Istanbul right after the elections.

⁸ “Gül: Yönetimi değiştirmeye varım”, *ntvmsnbc*, 14 May 2000.

⁹ “Tayyip Erdoğan: ‘Değişmek erdemdir’”, *Milliyet*, 23 August 2001.

officials to abuse their power.¹⁰ The concept of secularism (laïcité) would be re-defined¹¹ to not restrict personal choices and democracy would be the central goal for the whole of society to construct together. As a politician who deeply believes in the change of political infrastructure in Turkey, Erdoğan required that all runner-ups needed to win the election to hold a position within the party. As someone who has political expertise from early on in his career, Erdoğan is well-versed when it comes to knowing that 1990s crisis that occurred was due to a lack of renewal in the staff and management systems. This is one aspect within the party which Erdoğan took heed of. He gave great importance to a value-centered party and believed in a criteria based that would create a new political culture.

The political position which Erdoğan experienced during the 28 February period would allow him to adopt right decisions in the challenges and impositions against his party and values, as in the 27 April e-memorandum.

As Erdoğan founded AK Party his focus was a “transformative” approach in bringing out the political identity to the forefront of the political arena. According to this merit, Erdoğan was transformed through the changes that life brought forth to him along his journey. The transformation or change that is meant here is not submitting to the oligarchical powers. However, change for Erdoğan means elevating the

moral and cultural values within the civilization that we exist and carry them into the political platform. Such change was demanded to be through rendition and perception.

In 2001 as AK Party was being founded, there was one interesting aspect to Erdoğan’s political character and that is his revisionist approach. He was able to focus on the problem by setting the political agenda and was able to change terminologies. This change occurred as Erdoğan redefined concepts such as “conservative democracy” around the framework of rendering “local” politics.¹² In this sense Erdoğan’s realized party was going to be a representative of “local values that are at the same time universal.”¹³

Turkey’s Restoration and Erdoğan’s Prime Ministership

Since AK Party coming to power in 2002, much has been written on the years it has been in power focusing on the political, economic, and societal changes and transformations that have happened. Along these lines AK Party era witnessed a change and evolution period where “Erdoğan’s politics” enabled Turkish politics to normalize within the framework of Turkey’s restoration. As a newly elected to the government, Erdoğan inherited much of the economic and political crisis left from the previous governments. His main task was to set the country on track towards a “manageable Turkey.” Secondly, he aimed to shape politics in to a stronghold of society and strengthen the political machinery so that it can fight against military tutelage. As a result of this struggle the societal and political restoration period began with construction of “New Turkey.” AK Party’s attempt to change “old Turkey” was realized every time by increasing its votes in the ballot box which has enabled the strengthening

10 “Tayyip Erdoğan: ‘Partide asla bir lider diktatoryası oluşmayacaktır’, *Milliyet*, 14 August 2001.

11 “Refah disiplini gereği o sözleri söylemişim”, *Milliyet*, 22 August 2001.

12 M. Hakan Yavuz, *Erbakan’dan Erdoğan’a Laiklik, Demokrasi, Kürt Sorunu ve İslam*. (Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul: 2011).

13 Yalçın Akdoğan, “Muhafazakarlık ve Demokrasi Sempozyumu”, *Yeni Şafak*, 22 December 2003.

of a new resistance from within and outside the party. If we read Erdoğan's leadership starting from 2010 onward he was faced with challenges of opposition criticism. As someone who fed off from such media critics and others, Erdoğan rose above just being a Prime Minister and became the political figure of a movement which later became termed as "Erdoğan's politics."

In Erdoğan's Prime Minister era, two aspects of his position allowed for an evolution and restoration to begin. One of the first changes witnessed is the deeply rooted political philosophy. This change has allowed civil willpower, military and bureaucratic mechanisms to operate without the pressure of any tutelage which led to public perception of politics and democracy meaningful. Such change is done in the framework of restoration period of Turkey. Erdoğan's leadership in the work done in areas such as the normalization of civil-military relations, the rescuing of the Kurdish issue from a language of security and preparation of a bureaucratic and societal mentality ready for its solution, and the removal of democratization from being an exception to it being set in place in the framework of political transformation should not be ignored. Moreover, we can talk about the vision of an economic system that goes from protectionist and statist economic policies to an open market; it should be added that there is also an effort to follow policies in the social and political arena that are more liberal and that keep away from strict Kemalist understanding. It should be emphasized that he is a leader who can bring solutions to the inherited economic and political crises and who is willing to address the problems which are regarded as taboo in Turkey.

For Erdoğan, whose approach to socio-political reality is unique, he was able to shape the political center and re-define it within the public sphere. In the old vanguard system in which state and society relations were based on solely the state overrunning and being demanding of

society changed from its domineering approach to a mutual respect understanding. In this sense, his approach led to an examination of the dynamics of the established political system by revealing the bureaucratic mechanisms on which the privileged classes' concessions relied.

As a result, a society-centered political culture emerged as a new trend. This new culture of politics of code began to be used as a defense mechanism against political crisis and took on the basis of a pro-active and decisive "representative politics" towards the normalization of the political system. The reconfiguration of a paradigm change in the political sphere turned its direction towards a society centered in the larger framework of a sociological perspective. Thus, with a historic mission in hand, the system which constantly caused suffering in different parts of society was now responsible to gain back the trust once lost.

Erdoğan's goal towards normalizing the country went through a difficult stage of putting away conspiracies of an "internal enemy"¹⁴ that has been for some time used by the vanguard security based regime to justify an internal socio-political enemy from within. In this vein, the regime which created an "other," which labeled groups in the pool of Islamic movements, Kurds, Alawites, and non-Muslim minorities were now with Erdoğan's efforts given a voice in the public sphere as part of democratic politics.

One aspect of Turkey's evolution is a result of the changes made through policies. These include education, health care, infrastructure and social work which improved the services given to citizens and gave them the right to make demands whenever they wish. From another perspective, the Kurdish issue and minority rights that have been improved and the freedom given to exercise religious rights have all been im-

14 Nebi Miş, "Türkiye'de Güvenlikleştirme Siyaseti (1923-2000)", Unpublished Phd Dissertation, Sakarya University Social Sciences Institute, (2012).

proved within the rule of law under Erdoğan's leadership as Prime Minister.

Erdoğan has undoubtedly been decisive when it comes to the Kurdish issue and the peace plan that has been discussed along the lines of resolving the issue. The search for a resolution began with the ending of the state of emergency, expanded to the right to education in the mother tongue, and reached an important conclusion by the creation of a legal framework for the final solution of the PKK problem. Moreover, the old nation-state mentality has established early a societal system in which there existed a hierarchy which created the "other" based on ethnic, religious, and cultural identities. And in order to change this unjustified system of preference of one over the other Erdoğan never desisted from promoting a society in which all are equal. Especially witnessing Turkey's non-Muslim minorities' rights being returned and a legal framework that is set up for this process has been an important milestone. Observing Erdoğan from the perspective of such changes made one can say he is willing to take risks and stand by the decisions he takes until he gets the results. And this success can be attributed to his skill in convincing the society to support the political actions he takes through constitutional amendments. The change made in these areas mark an important turning point in the restoration of the country because people believed in what was being advocated and they were convinced by the leader of the country.

Throughout his speeches Erdoğan makes reference to one of the major achievements he made along with his party is freedom of religion allowed to be exercised in the public sphere. One of the major impediments seen over the years was the banning of headscarf in university campuses. Women with headscarf were not allowed to enter any state institutions while being covered and were not allowed to teach in classrooms. In order to end this injustice and put an end to such discrimination Erdoğan spent years bring-

ing state institutions and society to reconcile on this issue. In resolving this matter, Erdoğan not only removed the illegal ban of headscarves from university campuses but he also opened way for covered women to work in government and public institutions. In the same manner, Erdoğan prevented the unjust coefficient discrimination that was applied to Imam Hatip Schools and Vocational high schools.

One of Erdoğan's political skills demonstrated throughout the restoration period is his way of tackling any crisis that comes along the way. During his time as Prime Minister one of the political crises he dealt with was the 11th Presidential elections in which Erdoğan's colleague Abdullah Gül was nominated were the barriers brought forth by the opposition parties. A crisis was provoked via a method that was conjured and was without any framework; for the election of the president, the condition that 367 people would have to be in the parliament was brought forward. In the process of this crisis, Erdoğan faced challenges by not only opposition parties but he also struggled against the Constitutional Court and Supreme Court. Erdoğan was also challenged by the republic meetings organized by the People's Republican Court (CHP) and the e-coup announced on April 27, 2011. Despite these difficulties he had to face, Erdoğan managed the political crisis and stood firm against any attacks.

One of his methods of warding off attacks and struggling against political crisis is putting people's will in the forefront of the game. This has enabled him to consolidate people's will power against the injustices and crisis caused by the opposition. In the attempts made to strike out Erdoğan, from the beginning of his political career, have also seen a bigger attempt in 2008 when the chief prosecutor or attorney general of the Supreme Court prosecuted AK Party based on the perception that "AK Party has turned into a hub that is against secularism"

and opened a case to shut down the party. In this process Erdoğan kept his cool and was able to gather public support against such allegations from within and outside the party. Again in 2013 Taksim Gezi Park protests as a response Erdoğan, his party, and his voter supporters strategies and organized a walk titled “Respect to National Will” and benefited from the public support it garnered along the way. The experience he gained from such crisis would also serve useful in the December 17, 2013 process and the prosecutor coup which in the long run led Erdoğan to a successful fight.

THE ERDOĞAN EFFECT ON INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Erdoğan envisioned a Turkey that is both domestically and internationally powerful. This new image presented to the international community declares an image that uses domestic politics to foreign policies as well. Therefore, Turkey's system runs on a policy approach that is applicable to domestic issues and international issues. Turkey's early post-Cold War era which took a conflict and security approach was changed in Erdoğan's era where he began to use a new foreign affairs language. Erdoğan's framework of foreign policy is centered around establishing economic and diplomatic relations with neighboring countries. He also furthered the relations with Western countries to ensure that Turkey is dedicated to EU membership. Between 2003 and 2014, Erdoğan made visits to five continents to more than 100 countries and around 300 official visits creating an “Erdoğan-effect” in the international political arena.

The kind of success that Erdoğan earned in both domestic and foreign politics shows his ability to construct his personal leadership style while at the same time he knows how to influence the Middle East and Islamic world through

catering the AK Party method and model.¹⁵ AK Party's success in presenting itself as a model to the Islamic world quickly enabled a process towards democratization. Despite the negative interference that was made by Western counterparts into the Islamic world, Erdoğan relentlessly stood by the people against the coup-plotting regimes and its Western supporters.

The process of change and transformation during the AK Party period points to a restoration period wherein Turkish politics was normalized through “Erdoğan's politics”.

As an individual who is self-confident and vocal about his policies Erdoğan has always stood against injustices committed in the international arena. His response to international crisis like Somalia, Myanmar, Gaza and many more show Turkey's role as a helping hand and also as a “mediator.” The difference created by the AK Party movement and its leader Erdoğan is seen in Ahmet Davutoğlu framework is “conscientious diplomacy”¹⁶ that is applied both within and without. When the citizens of Egypt rightfully opposed their despotic leader, Hosni Mubarak, Erdoğan was the first most vocal leader to ask him to step down. When it comes to issues revolving around Palestine and Gaza and the illegal actions taken by the Israeli state, Erdoğan chose to “shed light” on the injustices and instead used a “morality-based politics” as opposed to realpo-

15 Burhanettin Duran and Nuh Yılmaz, in “Ortadoğu’da Modelerin Rekabeti, Arap Baharı’ndan Sonra Yeni Güç Dengeleri” *Türk Dış Politika Yıllığı* 2011, ed. Burhanettin Duran, Kemal Inat and Ali Resul Usul, (SETA, Ankara: 2012) p. 15-86.

16 See Murat Yeşiltaş and Ali Balcı “AK Parti Dönemi Türk Dış Politikası Sözlüğü: Kavramsal Bir Harita”, *Bilgi*, c.13, no.2 (Winter 2011), p.9-34.

litik view. With the aim of trying to isolate nationalist interest and aiming to form a morality based “global peace vision” Erdoğan wanted to create a normative framework that will recognize this view and understanding in the international platform. Erdoğan as an influential leader across the Muslim world has always promoted moderation as opposed to extremism and also continuously asserted the reality that Islamophobia is a hate crime that must end. Hence, Turkey’s foreign policy created an awareness and susceptibility for the global community to interpret and take action when it becomes necessary.¹⁷ All these peculiarities in Erdoğan’s approach to a global audience demonstrate Erdoğan’s vocality about Turkey’s future and its “upcoming vision” that he wants to leave as an inheritance for future generations to follow suit.

Erdoğan, as a leader who believes in himself and is straightforward, always spoke up against the injustices ignored by the international community and did not hesitate to show that he was on the side of the oppressed.

Despite the differing views about Erdoğan in the international arena he is one of the top ten well-known leaders across the board. This gives all the reason for analyzing him as an individual and his leadership style along with his views on foreign issues. First and foremost, he was able to change the party’s “low profile” into a “reputable” party which soon adapted to the

global system. As Turkey was a passive and bystander role that had almost no effect on foreign policy quickly turned into a proactive agenda determiner leader in the region that is more susceptible to its surrounding neighbors and to the Muslim world at large.

One of Erdoğan’s most important characteristics is his visionary outlook one can see in his leadership and how this is reflected in foreign politics. Erdoğan’s visionary understanding is far from “wait-and-see” politics when it comes to crisis and instead it is about tackling the crisis at the beginning of its emergence. This is one of his critical approaches when it comes to both domestic problems as well as international issues related to injustices. He is likely to apply this approach throughout his presidency. At the center of his goal both reflected in domestic and foreign politics is setting up the infrastructure for a “New Turkey.” In his view, New Turkey is a country in which an individual is proud to be a citizen of as part of a global state vision of Turkey. It is a country that is open to the global community and is transparent along with leadership demonstrated by its government and its citizens. It is also aimed to raise awareness and be local about injustices occurring around the globe and one that serves justice and truth. New Turkey is aimed to be a country that is vocal and is a leader in the global platform with its knowledge, production and leadership style.¹⁸

Erdoğan’s efforts to change Turkey into a global actor is part of the visionary leadership plan he has for the country. In the discussions involving a re-construction of the international system Erdoğan is opting for a Turkey centered international politics. Along these lines, Erdoğan’s call for international institutions “to reform” so as to give an opportunity for those actors who do not have a voice in the international platform. Another issue Erdoğan is opting for is the im-

17 Burhanettin Duran, “JDP and Foreign Policy As an Agent of Transformation” in *Emergence of a New Turkey: Islam, Democracy and the Ak Parti*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz, (The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, UT: 2006), p. 281-305.

18 “İşte Erdoğan’ın yeni sloganı”, *Yeni Şafak*, 11 July 2014.

portance of struggle towards just sharing of the platform and maintaining this justice through a new global order. This serves an important purpose because Erdoğan's goal at the basis is to allow the voiceless countries a place in the global system and give them the opportunity to participate in international decision-making processes. And according to Erdoğan this necessitates the global order to go through a political, economic and cultural criticism before a new order could be formed. This becomes a dire need because equality and sharing are important in the setup of a new global order. Although Erdoğan receives negative responses to his criticism of the global system, nevertheless, his advocacy for change has put him up the ladder as an important global figure whose ideas are discussed and criticized. This perspective of Erdoğan is likely to render him as a global leader and his foreign policy outlook is based on the views he continues to reflect in the international platform.

Erdoğan's reformist character can be exemplified in the change from a 90s "conflict and security-based" rhetoric towards an integrationist approach to the global system. For such reformist steps taken and for them to be continued required Erdoğan to set aside old enemy relations so that a speed of success could be given in the foreign policy agenda. And at the same time, Erdoğan successfully enabled Turkey to be a solution to the problems of the global order. "Alliance of Civilizations" is one example in which Turkey fought against terrorism and demonstrated strong will to be included as a problem-solver in any issue that arises in the global community.

If one looks at the whole framework, Erdoğan has a few characteristics that signify his leadership and these include his visionary stance, his reformist approach and his solution to cultural issues which all correspond to a successful Turkish foreign policy that has been shaped into a dynamic system in of itself.

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY AS THE LEADER OF A POLITICAL MOVEMENT

The year 2007 was a pivotal point in Erdoğan's political career as he showed clear defiance to any opposition that opposed the popular election of the president. In this vein, Erdoğan's efforts to restore Turkish political system also shows his benevolence as a leader to voice the people's demands for a direct election of the president as part of the democratic progress. The 2007 elections marked a turning point in the history of Turkey's election system because there was apparent effort to dissolve an "etatist" system. Prior to constitutional changes made, the presidential elections were turned into a crisis by bureaucrats who attempted to create a civil-military dysfunction.¹⁹

The elitist discourse that was positioned on the regime's security transformed the presidency into a tutelage mechanism and institution that would "guard the regime", as opposed to locating the president in the political sphere. This situation creates a division between state and politics where the president represents the state while on the other hand those ruling over politics are military and prominent bureaucrats. In other words, the president's role was sometimes minimized into a "symbolic figure." This office, which experienced an important deviation from this function with Turgut Özal, returned to its defensive-protectionist old statist mission with Sezer, and then transformed into a more dynamic and close to the public office with Abdullah Gül. Although there was not any change in the authority of the presidency during Özal and Gül's periods, as a result of the democratic understanding coming from their personal char-

¹⁹ Ali Aslan, Nebi Miş and Abdullah Eren, "Türkiye'de Cumhurbaşkanlığı'nın Demokratikleşmesi", *SETA Analiz*, no.103 (August 2014).

acteristics, the presidential office was brought closer to the public and a break with the traditional mission of this office occurred.

While the AK Party was trying to refine the old regime through restoration and despite it trying to strengthen and expand the institution of politics horizontally on the social dimension and vertically on the institutional one, those siding with the “old regime” managed to change it into a constitutional crisis during the 2007 presidential elections. After Ahmet Necdet Sezer’s appointed time ended in his place an AK party conservative and religious Abdullah Gül was nominated for the presidential election. The fact that his wife wore the headscarf created an atmosphere of criticism by the elitist opposition of the Kemalist camp and quickly turned into a crisis by organizing protests that would call on the military to take action. The military was quick in that they were fulfilling the mission demanded by the Kemalist secularists by issuing an e-coup where it was alluded that Gül must be “pro-Ataturk not just in word but in belief and action.” The chief of General Staff at the time who as Yaşar Büyükanıt personally wrote a letter underlining the fact that he was standing behind the e-coup issued and reminded Gül that his position as the Turkish army leader meant that the elections would directly affect him and the military.

During the time of the opposition party, some willingly and others unwillingly took advantage of this situation and created an “exceptional law” that would be used in their favor. As it was previously not seen in other presidential elections the exception of 367 votes was decided to be applied in the election. CHP’s appeal to the Constitutional Court was the result of the 367 required vote is perceived by the government as a result of a tutelage tradition. Erdoğan’s hard work against military-based pressures and staunch Kemalists in the opposition parties led him win against the e-coup and the decision of the Constitutional Court. His stance against the

tutelage tradition marked a splendid leadership in the eyes of the majority Turkish public. His efforts exemplify that in the future if such combative secularism does arise, then it is prompts loud vocal opposition to any tutelage traditions to be placed into action. If it was not for Erdoğan’s efforts to dissolve the effect of this military influence Gül would not have been elected. In order for such crisis to not surface again in the future, Erdoğan made a smart move to call on the public for a referendum. After the referendum it was made possible for the next presidential election to be elected directly by the people.

As it was lawfully enacted to the constitution that the president will be elected by the people the discussion made around the decision was shaped around a few points. One is the possible conflict or crisis that could arise if the people elect both a Prime Minister and a President at the same time. It has been noted that if the Prime Minister and President come from the same political background then it is less likely for disagreements to arise while on the contrary, the differences in the background could result in fault lines during election time. Although the opposition party wanted to resort to the Constitutional Court, they did not have enough material to present and defend against the ruling government. For Erdoğan, he immediately saw the opportunity to change the discussion into a “system” related issue in which he re-directed the game to revolve around new topics such as “presidential system” “semi-presidential system” and a “President with a political party identity.” His goal in bringing up these new discussions marks a desire to institutionalize the political stability that has been obtained during the AK Party period. The presence of a legal system who can put forward strong administrative formations would be able to ensure stability independent of parties. However, due to the negative attitude of opposition parties to these discussions, nothing panned out.

The second issue that revolves around the president being elected by the public is the change in the perception of the newly elected President.²⁰ The election of the president by the people would force all of the actors who were candidates for the Çankaya Palace to side with free politics and not the tutelage-controlled state. A nominee for the presidential election was going to have a difficult time if s/he was not going to take into account the public's values and their demands especially if s/he is not going to act within the parameters of democratic regime. This rhetoric in the long run is preventing those who run for the presidential seat to not abide by the status quo of a tutelage tradition but represent a democratic stance. However, another challenge that was to be brought up by the opposition is the role of presidency changing from "symbolic" to "active presidency." The president of Turkey will no longer be a figure that is "above politics" but rather be an influential political figure still playing in the game.

Going against this vision for the presidency in 2014 elections, the opposition decided to play a strategic trick by trying to create a discourse of societal agreement to demote the importance of a president's active role while in office. Devlet Bahçeli²¹ and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's²² arguments and their nominee for the presidential seat is nonetheless a representative of the old "symbolic" understanding of presidency and shows the desire for a continued old regime system. One the one hand, there is Bahçeli who is nationalist, conservative, and secular based on republican values and on the other hand there is Kılıçdaroğlu who has nominated a figure that has never been in politics. In this duo it was seen that a figure "above politics" and "a state man" appeared who was Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu as "joint candidate".

20 Nebi Miş, "Cumhurbaşkanlığı Kurumunun Demokratikleşmesi", *Sabah*, 28 June 2014.

21 "MHP'den çatı aday", *Hürriyet*, 7 May 2014.

22 Serpil Çevikcan, "Neden İhsanoğlu?", *Milliyet*, 17 June 2014.

Erdoğan evaluated the opposition's move of choosing a presidential candidate who would seem to be involved in politics but, would in fact be non-political by likening it to habits left over from old Turkey: "When saying the president should be impartial, they actually want a president who will stand against the people next to the state." According to Erdoğan, "By the transformation of the presidency into an office representing the people, Turkey would be rid of the most important link in the chain of the tutelage."²³ In addition, the people electing the president would lend it a much more democratic legitimacy.

The leadership characteristics that Erdoğan showed in the restoration of Turkish politics is apparent in the struggle conducted for the election of the president by the people and the democratization of this office.

Erdoğan's Election Politics and the Presidential Elections

The most important aspect of Erdoğan's election strategy was his focus on managing political expectations well by making the AK Party's agenda Turkey's agenda. In this sense, by pulling the opposition to his own discursive arena, he is making the political debates focus on his projects. Besides this, he is gaining the opportunity to renew his own politics as well as the cadres with each election and thus contributing to the establishment of a political culture wherein politics have become institutionalized. The fact that with each election he has been gaining increasing votes leads towards the consolidation of the

23 "Başbakan'dan ilk adaylık konuşması", *Sabah*, 1 July 2014.

politics he has implemented so far and towards renewing his legitimacy in each election period. In this sense, for Erdoğan's politics, preparing for the elections and managing the electoral period in the best possible way is of central importance.

As a leader who has consistently won the 9 elections he has entered in his 12-year long period of governance, greatly outscored his closest opponent, and cemented this difference in a near permanent state, Erdoğan has brought his party to the position of "dominant political party".

One of the important reasons for why the local elections of March 30th were conducted in the shadow of the December 17 process and occurred in a referendum-like environment was due to an attempt to make the AK Party enter the presidential elections--which were to be conducted after a very short time--in a weakened state. With a substantial decrease in the votes of the AK Party, the anti-Erdoğan based opposition would have been able to consolidate and in this way would have gained greater motivation for the presidential elections. However, despite a campaign of discrediting directed at Erdoğan and his party, voters chose the AK Party and facilitated Erdoğan's victory by having him come out of the March 30 elections with increased votes. This situation not only had the effect of strengthening the expectations about Erdoğan's candidacy for president, but was also influential in having Erdoğan look more favorably upon candidacy.

The opposition, however, went into a process of attempting to render the AK Party's electoral victory meaningless and began expending all of its energy on obstructing Erdoğan from becoming

president. On the other hand, by setting out the possible features of a president in the framework of "being above the parties", they brought their worries about the transformation of the position of the president to the forefront. Additionally, the opposition used its political energy to discuss who the AK Party's candidate should be rather than on their own candidates. The point when this strategy was most obvious was when they announced--in a bid to cause a new debate within the AK Party--that were Abdullah Gül to run again, they would support him. In this way, the opposition developed an anti-Erdoğan strategy in an effort to retain attention and manage the different social and political segments that had mobilized against Erdoğan instead of focusing on the AK Party.

While there was general agreement on Erdoğan's candidacy within the AK Party, the basic worry was about the future of the AK Party after Erdoğan became president. In order to make these debates inconsequential and to avoid potential intra-party struggles, Erdoğan especially emphasized two topics and kept them at the fore. The first of these was his explanations implying the fact that even if he became president, he would still be concerned with the party's developments as the leader of this political movement. In connection to this, he also underlined the importance of protecting the general principles that had been put in place since the establishment of the party, including the "three term rule". The second emphasis was that of political mission (da'wa) consciousness". According to Erdoğan, the AK Party which should be seen as a da'wa, was "built on immortal truths rather than on passing personalities." In addition, Erdoğan would have to stress that those who thought the party's future depended on the people did not actually understand the da'wa. Erdoğan expressed his personal position in this process more clearly through the following:

"AK Party is not a party that has appeared through people or arrived at this point

through people. The AK Party is a da'wa party. Throughout my political career, I have not been someone who sought duties but rather waited for them. I did not walk alone, but rather with everyone. We are not and will not be worried. I know that there is a strong tradition and heroes who can shoulder this da'wa. I believe that we have the strong cadres to take the AK Party to further stations without falling into conceit or the trap of intrigue and sedition.”²⁴

In his speech on July 1st where his presidential candidacy was announced, Erdoğan actually put forward Turkey's adventure of democratization in the latest period by speaking about the cornerstones of his political struggles. He presented a framework wherein his political experiences were identified with the struggle of Turkey's conservative sectors.²⁵ He reserved a large part of his speech to the principles over which he had conducted his politics:

“We conducted our politics for the poor in the outskirts of cities. We did it for the sheep that were lost along the shores of the Tigris. We did it to end the tortures in Diyarbakir Prison and the cruelty in Mamak. We did it for the mothers who were forbidden from speaking their mother tongue. We did it for those decent men who were not treated as such because they were poor. We did it for the Middle East, for Palestine, for Somalia, for Iraq. (...) We dreamed of Turkey with her head held up high. We transformed the Turkey whose confidence had been torn apart and plundered in the past 200 years into a country saying I am also here in her own region and in the world.”²⁶

While preparing for the presidential elections, Erdoğan tried to deepen the meaning of his political movement through a framework of constructivist politics by emphasizing the discourse of the “New Turkey”. This political understanding

is a follow-up of the reformist discourse that had been prevalent during the years when AK Party was established and has been established on three main points: “democratic governance”, “welfare society” and “pioneer state”. As can be understood from his vision statement, the completion of the restoration rising from the continuation of the “democratization” of domestic politics which had fortified during his term as prime minister, the continuation of “welfare”, “development”, and “urbanization” in the economy, and Turkey's rise and the consolidation of its power in foreign policy are among Erdoğan's priorities.²⁷ Accordingly, as an effectual president, Erdoğan will follow a politics where AK Party's reformist and restorationist political identity and the “executive” branches will be carried to a position of “directing and moulding” and maintained in this way.²⁸

Because the August 10, 2014 Presidential Elections will be the first time the president will be directly elected by the people, the votes gathered by the leaders have meanings expanding beyond the political parties to which they belong. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, by receiving 51.79% of the votes (21,000,260 votes), has more votes than the sum of his competitors' votes. While the joint candidate Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu received 38.44% of the votes (15,587,132 votes), the HDP's candidate Selahattin Demirtaş received 9.76% of the votes (3,958,510 votes). In this way, Erdoğan increased the 19.5 million votes the AK Party received in the March 30 local elections during these elections, despite a participation rate of only 74%. When evaluating Erdoğan's political career from a numerical standpoint, in all of the elections where he participated as the head of the AK Party, Erdoğan has reached the highest number of votes in these elections, coming only after the 2011 ones.

24 “Başbakan'dan ilk adaylık konuşması”, *Sabah*, 1 July 2014.

25 Hatem Ete, “Temsil Siyaseti ve Erdoğan'ın Adaylığı”, *Akşam*, 3 July 2014.

26 “Başbakan'dan ilk adaylık konuşması”, *Sabah*, 1 July 2014.

27 Burhanettin Duran, “Bir Siyasal Hareket Olarak AK Parti ve Erdoğan”, *Sabah*, 4 July 2014.

28 Nebi Miş, “Seçim Sürecinin Türkiye Siyasetine Kalıcı Etkileri”, *Sabah*, 12 July 2014.

The Influence of Erdoğan's Leadership on Election Results

As a leader, by continuously winning the 9 elections he entered in the 12 years of his administration, substantially outscoring his closest opponents, and making the difference a lasting one, Erdoğan has brought his party to the position of "the ruling political party." In the latest presidential elections, Erdoğan has received more votes than the sum of the votes of the two opposition parties that were closest to him. In this sense the problem of durability political parties faced and their eventual weakening and running out politically--the greatest lack in the institutionalization of Turkish political culture--has been brought to a different level by the position of "ruling political party."²⁹

The fact that he has won every election he has entered, and that he has come out as the winner in the first round of the presidential elections, means that the ideas defended by Erdoğan and his political interpretations for the future have been internalized. Therefore, while the election results are due to economic stabilization and enlargement, the betterment of the place of social classes, and the rise of Turkey's democratization threshold with a strong political basis, a large part is as a response to the consolidation of Erdoğan's politics of leadership. When regarded from this point of view, the results of the presidential elections have built Erdoğan's position not just as the leader of a political party but more so as the leader of a political movement; as such, he has gone up to Çankaya as the leader of a political movement. Erdoğan, as the first directly elected president, will be a constructive actor in the formation of his presidency's new mission.³⁰

²⁹ See Hatem Ete, "Hâkim Parti Olma Yolunda AK Parti", *Akşam*, 26 August 2014; Galip Dalay, "Yeni Türkiye'nin Hâkim Partisi", *Al Jazeera*, 26 August 2014.

³⁰ Nebi Miş, "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan ve Kurucu Siyaset", *Star Açık Görüş*, 17 August 2014.

ERDOĞAN'S CONSTRUCTIVE PRESIDENCY

With the transition to a multi-party system in Turkish political life, a relationship inherent to modern democratic political systems was established between the state and society. This development, whereby modern politics was truly brought into Turkey's politics, opened the state to all societal groups. The state's arrival to a point equidistant from all societal groups placed the Kemalist tutelage, the appropriator of the state, in a situation of uncertainty and fluctuation. Losing their control over the state in this way, the Kemalist elites and societal forces established a tutelary system "compatible" with the democratic system in the face of societal change. Accordingly, the political influence of the administrations that came to power through elections over the state would be controlled by the drawing of a "red line". The tutelary system made the principles and societal power distribution emanating from Kemalist identity sovereign to the requests of societal transformation.

In the struggle between the state-appropriating Kemalist forces and the societal zones forced to the periphery, the office of the president also took on an important role. By the 1961 Constitution, which plays a critical role in the establishment of the tutelary system, the presidency was made into an important part of the executive branch by splitting the executive into two. The office of the president, separate from the administration (the other part of the executive system) elected by the people, was responsible for reflecting the will of the Kemalist tutelage more than the will of the people and to force the elected administration to adjust and act according to the tutelary ideology. The election of the president by the parliament and not by the people is an extension of the aim and a function of protecting the government from the people. The parliament

electing the president made it possible for the tutelary regime (and especially the “watchman of the regime”, the army) to impose their own candidate on the popularly elected parliament members. When the president’s critical place for the tutelary regime as a political actor is taken into account, the office of the president is neither neutral, nor symbolic, nor irresponsible. The office of the president was one that took the tutelage’s side and that controlled and oversaw the elected administration; it was an office which was accountable to the tutelary regime.³¹

In Turkey, the president is a political actor who interferes in political processes by way of acting or not acting as the case may be. However, the role that the presidency plays was subjected to a transformation due to the political struggles that occurred between the tutelage and the oppositional societal forces. The changing place of the presidency with these struggles laid out the pace of the country’s democratization. This announces that the presidency is not an office that is above-politics, but rather one that is completely “political”. This state of being political has brought out different presidential typologies. If we are to categorize the office of the president—from Turkey’s transition to a multi-party system on—in terms of the positions taken by this office on the relations between the administrations that were brought to power and the tutelage and its political attitude, we encounter four types of president.

Passive President

The first of these is the passive president type. Two structural circumstances can be mentioned that bring about the passive president. The first of these conditions is the presence of a political environment in which the interference of non-political actors (the army) are seen as being relatively legitimate, democratic politics take a back-

seat, and security politics are at the fore. In this kind of environment, in a manner parallel to that of the civilian political actors, the presidents also do not play a central role in politics. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the majority of the actors who step into the presidential office are members of the army. This situation carries Çankaya essentially to the same line as the barracks, and means that Çankaya follows in the footsteps of the barracks and comes after it.

The second conditional point that makes a passive president is the as short and as narrow a distance as possible between the tutelage and politics. To state this more clearly, the president is not obligated to take on any responsibilities due to the presence of a substantial degree of ideological harmony between the elected administration and the tutelary regime in terms of political tendency. The presence of ideological harmony, by activating the forces of tutelage, quells a political emptiness that would need to be filled. Thus, because the elected administration does not challenge the tutelary regime in a comprehensive and organized manner, the president does not have to take critical steps to protect the regime. This means that the passive president is observed when situations of protecting the present political system or keeping up with the status quo do not arise. This situation points to a presidency that is specific to historical periods where structural continuity is dominant and thus societal change is inert.

Due to the civil strife that was prevalent during the Cold War years, this period was marked by military coups and had the military playing a much more influential role against civilian politics; it was a period that did not allow for a questioning of the tutelage and societal transformation was locked into a struggle between right and left. Thus, the presidents who took office at this time—a period when Kemalist hegemony was strong and security-based politics held sway—were passive presidents who did not need to take much initiative for the protection of the regime.

³¹ Ali Aslan, Nebi Miş and Abdullah Eren, “*Türkiye’de Cumhurbaşkanlığı’nın Demokratikleşmesi*”.

Status Quo President

The second is the status quo president type. There are also two structural conditions that bring about this type of president. The first of these conditions is that democratic politics gain precedence over security politics. In this case, the activity of non-political actors such as the army are limited and take on a much more roundabout aspect. This means that when the protection of the tutelage is at stake, as opposed to the situation during the Cold War period, it is civilian forces who play the leading role. The president as a civilian power takes his place as a key actor in the protection of the Kemalist tutelage and the struggle for the continuation of the status quo.

The second condition is the tendency of the scissor of ideological difference between the tutelage and the elected administration to split. In essence, this shows a questioning of Kemalism as the political center. To give an example, the political positions of the Cold War period had occurred in terms of right versus left, a situation which did not allow for the questioning of Kemalism. On the contrary, both right and left had surfaced from Kemalism as their political basis, and were positions identified by referral to Kemalism. In this situation, there was no ideological differentiation between the tutelage and the elected administration. However, when in the post-1990s the right-left polarization became meaningless, politics began to be identified by the polarization between Kemalism and its societal opposition. In this way, when the ideological incompatibility between the tutelage and the elected administration reached its zenith, it forced the office of the president--an important trivet of the tutelage--to act. As stated above, because democratic politics dominated and made it difficult for the army to directly interfere in politics, the assignment of acting with but seeming in front of it was placed on the president as a civilian power.

Additionally, status quo presidents are encountered during periods where in terms of pow-

er relationships, the elected administration and societal oppositional forces are more powerful and influential relative to the representatives of the tutelage in the political arena. As a result of the tutelage's extensions in politics not being able to cope with the societal and political oppositional forces by itself, the tutelage's actors outside of parliament--for example the president--take the initiative by stepping in. The insufficiency of legitimate political channels has compelled the interference of actors that are outside of the parliament and also non-political.

In conclusion, we come across status quo presidents in the period following the Cold War when the left-right polarization became meaningless and Turkish politics began to occur through the struggles between the Kemalist tutelage and the Kurdish and Islamist opposition. Süleyman Demirel, active during 1993-2000 as the ninth president, and Ahmet Necdet Sezer, active during 2000-2007 as the tenth president, can be shown as examples for this type of president. While Demirel played an active role in the suppression of the Islamist and Kurdish opposition in the face of the tutelage, Sezer took on the task of slowing down the democratization process which the AK Party administration had led and activated in order to cause the tutelage to withdraw.

Reformist President

The third type of president is the reformist president. This presidential type appears in a political situation where the wave of societal transformation has surrounded the tutelage and forced it towards reforms. The reformist president clearly brings to the fore the radical fracture that has occurred in the position of the president in the country's politics. The president, for the first time, has taken an anti-tutelage position in the relationship between the tutelage and the elected administration. Reformist presidents have been observed when the actors of the parliament have been strong enough to act independently of the

suggestions of the tutelage's actors. By means of the increasing significance of the society through the democratization process that defined the 2000s, the parliament was able to elect a president appropriate to society's requests while being able to ignore the tutelage's condition of ideological harmony. The president, receiving his power and legitimacy from the people rather than from the tutelage, has played a parallel role in the executive branch by taking the demands for societal transformation against the tutelage into account. This role has occurred by acting in collaboration with the elected administration with the aim of causing the tutelage to retreat.

Turgut Özal, the eighth president active during a period when Turkey was opening up to the outside world and radical changes were taking place in Turkish political life as well as in international politics (1989-1993), can be described as a reformist president. In this case, however, the tutelage's power and influence against the societal opposition significantly blocked Özal's reformist role. In a similar way, the eleventh president Abdullah Gül is also a reformist president who was active during a period when the tutelage was losing ground and withdrawing in the face of a trend of democratization. This period, covering the years between 2007 and 2014, is a period wherein the tutelage crumbled and democratic politics truly began to take root in Turkish political life.

Constructive President

The fourth and final type of president is the constructive president. Chosen by the people, the twelfth president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan can be portrayed as a constructive president. Erdoğan is stepping in to the presidential office during a political atmosphere where the struggle with the tutelage is almost at an end. The focus of politics has changed greatly when compared with previous periods. Politics has evolved from a struggle between the tutelage and the societal opposition to a point of entering a social construction pe-

riod through the interaction of various societal groups. Thus, Erdoğan's presidency will cover a period of re-construction of political life and its institutionalization. Also, Erdoğan is the first president to have been directly elected by the people. This fact carries Erdoğan's political legitimacy and executive responsibility to much higher levels.

Erdoğan's presidency will cover the re-establishment and re-institutionalization of political life in the aftermath of the tutelary.

Erdoğan, by transforming the office of the president in a practical sense by using all of the presidential mandates will de facto compel Turkey toward the presidential system. In this way during Erdoğan's period, the presidency will truly transform from a "symbolic" office into one that steers "execution" and will be in the position of actively being involved in the management of the country. What draws even greater attention here is that the presidency's function in the political system of restraining the executive slides to a line of working together with the executive, and with Erdoğan's presidency this is brought to an even further dimension. In the way, the office of the president during Erdoğan's term will be involved in the struggle of intellectually and institutionally constructing the "New Turkey".³²

In conclusion, it can be expected that Erdoğan will play a much more active and central role in the executive due to the responsibilities laid upon him by being a president during a period of "establishment" and with the power and legitimacy given him through his election by

³² See Burhanettin Duran, "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın Misyonu", *Sabah*, 12 August 2014.

the people. When the methods of election and the present political conditions are considered, it is possible to say that the distance between the office of the president and the administration--which form the two arms of the executive--will close and that the operating mechanism of the political system in terms of the administrative system will be forced to change.

“NEW TURKEY” DURING PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN’S TERM

This period of establishment during which Erdoğan will be president points to the construction of “New Turkey”. “New Turkey” puts forward the aim of constructing a new subjectivity for Turkey in terms of global politics.³³ Some of the related dimensions of this new subjectivity can be detailed here. The Erdoğan-led AK Party administration aims to establish the country’s military and economic independence and autonomy within the context of “New Turkey”. For this to be gained, the struggle to provide for the augmenting of the country’s institutional and military capacity and for the actualization of its economic progress comes to the fore. In order to pull up the country’s material-institutional capacity and durability, there is an aim to establish simultaneously a just and democratic order. For this, there is a turn towards the people and pains taken to install a strong and healthy bond between the state and the people. In this way, there is an attempt to end the distance and estrangement between the will of the state and the people, and to have the people’s energy contribute to the state’s power. In sum, in “New Turkey”, the construction period for a subjectivity that has drawn the framework of a political project containing independency, develop-

ment, and democratization will speedily continue from where it was left off.

Shaped around these aims and appearing as the search for a new subjectivity, “New Turkey” aims to transform the present political structures. It is post-Kemalist with its aim of democratization, post-Western with its aim of independence, and post-Westphalian with its aim of a new political unit and institutionalization shaping the basis for the previous two aims. While at the basis of its aim of democratization lies the creation of a new body politic, there is an effort of uniting with and transforming its region by stretching the Westphalian nation-state border concept in its aim of institutionalization. Aiming to transform itself and its region by way of creating a new body politic and a new political unit, Turkey is also working toward transforming the global politics which centers around Western civilization and accordingly orders international politics. Transformation in global politics is identified as carrying the uni-civilizational and exclusionist global politics to a level that is multi-civilizational and democratic-pluralistic. At the end of this interlocking national, regional, and global transformation, the attempt to present a new subjectivity and new global order will be continued.

Post-Kemalist Nation

This aim of “New Turkey” which covers different dimensions has been on the Erdoğan-led AK Party administration’s agenda ever since the beginning. While on the one hand the AK Party administration tried to downgrade the tutelage, it also followed a politics of reconstructing the vacuum formed from the ouster of the tutelage by a conservative-democrat project. If we are to take a look at the dimensions of this project, we must first speak of the establishment of a post-Kemalist nation. In the present situation, the “nation’s” borders have begun to be drawn anew, in an expanded manner, through the blending of

³³ Ali Aslan, “Türk Dış Politika Eleştirilerinin Açmazları”, *SETA Perspektif*, no. 64 (21 August 2014).

the common civilizational past with democratic politics. In this context, many societal phenomena which were identified as exclusionist and divisive for the society in the old Turkey were defined with a more inclusive, conciliatory, and cohesive content. For example, nationalism has been redefined against the previous narrow definition of nationalism, which had been reduced to only being about Turkish ethnicity. Accordingly, a new shape has been given to political community going beyond ethnic belonging and centering around the concept of “Türkiyelilik” (a form territorial-state identity), which contains an emphasis on the common homeland and belonging among various ethnic and religious political groups in Turkish society.

Secularism, also negatively connoted and identified as being against religion, left its place to a positive definition of secularism as a mechanism which brings forth respect for different religious beliefs and world views and which allows for the interaction of different views on a common platform.

The suggestion of new concepts which will play key roles in the construction of society has accompanied the new conceptualization of societal phenomena left over from the old Turkey. In this context, the terms of justice and development come to the fore in service of the enlargement of the borders of the nation. Justice, one of the fundamental concepts of conservative-Islamist politics, is--generally speaking--the falling into place of societal factors and the fulfillment of societal demands. At this point, two steps were taken: first, the political rights of ethnic and religious groups that had been excluded during the tutelary period were returned; second, in terms of economics, the attempted redistribution in a fairer manner and increase the living standards of the economically disadvantaged parts of society took place. The concept of development has appeared in terms of keeping the life standards of the newly-increased middle class--the motor of

the AK Party--at a certain point, and through the presentation of a will to have this class expand continuously. In this way, the parts of society that had been excluded were pulled back into the nation through both political-cultural and also economic ways.

However, the nature of modern politics is open to transformation and uncertainty and thus these gains are not absolute; societal change and transformation in the country is continuing. This puts forward some of the problems that Erdoğan will face as president during the constructive period in front of us. For example, the peace process that began in January 2013 for the Kurdish issue must be resolved by going on to the next stage. The steps that need to be taken on this issue are not just societal, they are also ones that will affect the state's constitutional make-up. It will be necessary for these steps to be taken courageously and the probable reactions from the society will have to be kept under control.

In a similar way, the parts of society that are moving from the periphery to the center and joining the nation are also being exposed to some alterations. These parts, who are mostly AK Party electors and who form the majority of the society, have begun to individualize and show the characteristics of the global middle class. Therefore there are changes occurring in the cultural and political demands of these parts who are newly becoming middle class. Erdoğan and the AK Party in general will find a large populace that is culturally changing and becoming more individualized. This situation will force the AK Party moving with the mission of reconstructing the society to revise its current political discourse based on comparisons with the old Turkey and to develop a new political language. This situation also points to the necessity of ensuring the rationality for the stable continuity of economic growth.

Another challenge is how a relationship will be forged in the context of the construction of

the “New Turkey” with the leftist-liberal and secular-nationalist parts of the population who did not vote for the AK Party and who are withdrawing into themselves and becoming more congregational. These parts of the population, who are losing their old privileges and resisting the new social reality, perceive the AK Party administration and especially Erdoğan as “enemies” and create a societal discourse where the two parts are against each other. This polarization is servicing the establishment of relations in the political arena on the basis of enmity and inhibiting the development of social unity and identity. In a political environment where the parties regard each other as enemies, it is not possible for common ground--meaning collectivism and thus democracy--to arise.

In order for a new political unit to be put forth which have an important place in the “new Turkey”’s establishment, the AK Party government under Erdoğan’s leadership attempted to stretch and make non-sensical nation-state borders by enabling and re-organizing relations at both the international and communal levels.

It is necessary to end the country’s polarization for the “New Turkey” alluding to the aim of constructing a new social objectivity and identity. There is no doubt that the AK Party opposition, bereft of offering any positive politics, will continue their strategy of halting the expansion of the conservative-democrat project in the social area by reproducing this societal polarization. However, the AK Party administration has the ability to take steps to gradually turn the basis of these relationships from “enemy” to “competitor”. These steps have to

be ones that pick up on the opposition’s social demands which the AK Party then needs to add to its structure and meet them; they also need to be political steps that marginalize the present polarization (and the actors inciting polarization) and render it meaningless by pushing this polarization to the periphery. The period in front of us which will bear witness to the formation of the “New Turkey” will also be a period of how these steps are materialized.

In sum, the “New Turkey” will bear witness to the actualization of a social objectivity that protects the society’s differences on the national scale but that also is built around common ethical-political principles. At the most fundamental level, this means the end of the social construct specific to the old Turkey with its closed political “congregations” and an evolution towards an actual society with common ethical-political principles. The construction of a new social objectivity forms the second (the first was the withdrawal of the tutelage) and advanced leg of the AK Party’s aim of democracy. “New Turkey”, mentioned as an aim of new social objectivity will finally become materialized and be crowned with a new constitution and sturdier institutions.

Post-Westphalian Political Unit

Secondly, important steps have been taken for the construction of a post-Westphalian political unit. Old Turkey’s foreign policy was set with the purpose of reaffirming a Westphalian political unit based on a secular-nationalist identity. There were two dimensions to this policy. First of all, relations with the region were limited to the international level. This contributed to the fragmenting-based arrangement of the region in the aftermath of the fall of the empire into multiple and exclusive sovereign areas. In this way, the social and civilizational accumulation, which had far surpassed international relations and been created through common historical experience, were being discounted. In practice,

this situation meant limiting economic and cultural relations with the region and keeping it under control at the societal level. At the same time, this also caused the pursuance of a cultural politics that was exclusionist and alienating the regional communities.³⁴

Second of all, there was an anticipation of turning the country completely to the West at the level of international relations and thus to abstract it from and make it foreign to the region. When the dimension of the creation of a new national identity by foreign policy practices is considered, national interests and security policies were following a line getting further and further away from the region. This inclination manifested itself in practice as not being involved in regional politics, and if involvement could not be avoided, behaving neutrally in the conflicts of the region.

In response to old Turkey's politics whereby the Westphalian nation-state was recreated, the AK Party administration put the "zero problems with neighbors" policy into effect. This policy was a huge step towards the unearthing of the social and civilizational accumulation that transcended international relations and which had enveloped the region, which the old Turkey had tried to erase. By trying to revitalize the social at the regional level, there was an aim towards dislocating the central position of international relations which made the societies foreign to each other. Accordingly, the political discourses emphasizing common history and space were accompanied by practical politics in the form of visa removal, support given to the cultural and economic activities of non-state actors, and increase of reciprocal trade and human flow.

A substantial increase in the interest shown towards the region at the international level was also observed. The foreign policy, shaped through

the conservative-democrat identity, occurred through being involved in the region, taking sides in the conflicts of the region, and moving jointly with the region's societies. However, these relations were being carried out in a manner different from the conventional international relations mode that recreated the nation-state and which conflicted with the modern idea of sovereignty from time to time. The organization of a joint inter-ministerial meeting with the region's countries is a good example of this. In brief, in order to put forward a new political unit--of importance for "New Turkey"--the Erdoğan-led AK Party attempted to activate relations at both the international and societal levels and to stretch and render meaningless the borders of the nation-state by rearranging it.

"New Turkey's" reformist foreign policy reached its zenith during the Arab Spring period. The democratic populace was openly supported against the status quo and authoritarian regimes who owed their power to the nation-state structures. Although this reformist attempt was repulsed to a great extent, the nation-state construct suffered lasting damages. States which had been shaped by European colonizers without care for social or geographic realities such as Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq went into periods of fragmentation. In the authority vacuum that occurred in the region, bizarre political compositions such as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) began to form. But in recent analysis, while the uncertainties and institutional destructions surrounding the region cause serious security problems for Turkey, it also affords an opportunity for a post-Westphalian political structuring.

Still, the reformist foreign policy the AK Party has been following is facing serious challenges. Led by Erdoğan, the "New Turkey" will have to face dozens of challenges at the regional level. The first of these challenges carries a normative quality. Turkey's search for a post-Westphalian regional order and its display of a critical atti-

³⁴ Ali Aslan, *The Westphalian Moment in Turkey: From Civilization to State* (to be published).

tude towards modern nation-state sovereignty at the beginning of the Arab Spring was labeled as a policy of “neo-Ottomanist imperialism” and thus attempted to be neutralized. In the proceeding period, discursive strategies and criticisms such as the AK Party administration’s foreign policy being “sectarian” and motivated by “pan-Islamism” were brought into play. Although these criticisms are far from the truth of AK Party’s reformist foreign policy, they are made possible by the fact that the Westphalian sovereign-state order is still the hegemonic discourse and norm in the region. In the upcoming period, the “New Turkey” aiming for a normative transformation in its region needs to produce more effective discourses and political practices against these ideological-normative criticisms and to the norm that interrupts democracy in the region itself.

Practice-wise, “New Turkey” will have to face the problems created by the interruption of the reformist flow due to the reversal of the wind that had been flowing during the Arab Spring. In this context, Turkey will have to repair the damage to its soft power and take steps to pull it back up in order to keep the reformist spirit alive in the region. In this context, it is essential that the communication with the region’s nations and the material-spiritual support to the people continue. In a similar way, the country’s material capacity should be increased and its institutional infrastructure be revised in a manner that coincides with “New Turkey”’s foreign policy ideals. There is a pressing and radical need to reconfigure old Turkey’s foreign policy and institutions--military, foreign ministry, and intelligence services--that were focused on protecting the defense and the status quo to fit the active and reformist foreign policy aim.

Post-Western International Order

Lastly, the Erdoğan-led AK Party administration was involved in the search for a post-Western international order. The old Turkey thought of

itself as a Western state by virtue of its secular-nationalist identity. This meant the acceptance of the universality of Western civilization and the enablement of Turkey’s inclusion in this universal civilization. In foreign policy as well the country’s interests were being determined by looking after the West’s benefit and forming them on the same parallel. Turkey was actively contributing to the regeneration of the Western civilization’s universality. This leaning meant supporting the international society’s monist, unequal, and anti-democratic organization which discounted and excluded non-Western societies.

“New Turkey”, however, rejects the universality of the modern Western civilization in the global world we have arrived at today. It embraces the idea that civilizations are plural. Thus, there is a call for the reorganization of the present international order and institutions which were shaped according to the universality of the Western civilization into a new order which takes into account the plurality of civilizations and in a democratic-pluralist manner. The point where this call has become most concrete is for reforms to be made to the United Nations Security Council’s structure and for this reform to be done in a just way, while taking the plurality of civilizations into account.

At the same time, by emphasizing Turkey as both a Western and an Islamic civilization during this period, Turkey has been placed as a “central country”. There was not a passive aim of providing for communication and ordering relationships between the two civilizational basins by having Turkey play a “bridge” role with this central country concept. The central country strategy meant the activation of the country’s civilizational wealth in order to become an active and playmaker actor in the international arena. Parallel to this, at the point of determining Turkey’s national interests, its being an independent state was emphasized. In this way, the “New Turkey”, placed as a central country, carried the

claim of participating in the construction of a democratic-pluralist international order as an active and autonomous subject.

However, the international order's hegemonic power, the Western world, was not particularly receptive to this demand for democratization. In order to fill the meaning and authority vacuum created by the end of the Cold War in the international system, the Western powers tried to put forward a new antagonism. The politics of securitization ("clash of civilizations") towards non-Western civilizations, which stretched back to the 1990s as a thinking style and which went into practice in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, was conducted. The destruction caused by this civilization-based and post-colonial understanding was felt most by the Islamic world. The Middle East region came under attack and a strategy of continuing the fragmented structure of the region was followed. The open and indirect military and political support given to halt the Arab Spring process and for the status quo powers to come back to the fore reveals this inclination.

In a similar manner, those searching for democracy in the Islamic world had to struggle against the "liberal tutelage". In the Islamic world, there is an attempt to curb the search for democracy by Islamic movements who have gained ground due to the faltering of the secular-authoritarian regimes. In this context, the reality of democracy as being possible on the basis of a social ground that is connected to ethical-political principles belonging to a social setting is not being taken into consideration and is being rejected. In its place, the ethical-political values particular to Western civilization (liberal-democracy) are presumed to be universal and the idea of these values being the constructive elements for the social of other nations is being put forward. In this way there is an attempt to politically marginalize and drown out the political actors doing politics through Islamic and local values. The "dictator" accusations leveled against

Erdoğan when the Arab Spring process was gaining speed finds its global political context with the AK Party administration's politics conducting by emphasizing local values by moving off of a conservative-democrat project with its "New Turkey" assertion. The search for a subjectivity that is independent and autonomous from the West reflects the aim of constructing a societal platform where there is equality in the relations between civilizations and partnership at the global level. However, the non-Western civilizations are not accepted as equals by Western powers and there is an attempt to neutralize these non-Westerners through their portrayal as "monsters".

The AK Party is calling for the re-organization of the international system which so far has been shaped according to the universality of Western civilization in a more democratic-pluralist manner.

In sum, there is an attempt to drown out "New Turkey's" search for a pluralist-democrat international order, one of its important legs, by way of post-colonial politics and liberal tutelage. The greatest political struggle of the Erdoğan-led AK Party administration is the struggle it will give against the global liberal tutelage which has had an impact on the opposition at the national level. The Gezi incidents and the December 17-25 coup attempts of the "parallel construct" stand before us as the material incidents of post-colonial politics' and liberal tutelage's discourse being put into practice. At this point, "New Turkey's" construction depends on the success of the struggles based on the practical-politics and discourse against these challenges. In other words, for the materialization of Turkey's search for a democratic-pluralist

international order, it is faced with the struggle of owning the necessary material-institutional capacity and discursive strength.

CONCLUSION

Erdoğan appeared as an actor in a political environment marked with structural traumas in the 1990s. From the beginning of the 2000s and on, Erdoğan and the conservative-democrat political cadres led by him began to rise with the structures loosening even more. For the first time in this period, the dispatch of the remains of the tutelary regime occurred through democratic reforms. This was later followed by a period wherein new structures were constructed. From 2009 on with Erdoğan's leadership, while the chronic problems of the society were aired, the construction of a new nation was undertaken. The tutelage showed great resistance against these "daring" steps. First the Gezi Park incidents, then the 17-25 December coup attempt was experienced. However, Erdoğan and his team parried these challenges with finesse.

One of the legs of Erdoğan's success in politics is his successes in municipalities and his innovations in this arena in Turkey. Especially during this period, by reaching out to the politically inactive parts of society--such as women--and by pulling them into the mechanism of politics, taking one-on-one relations with voters to the center, and by succeeding in reaching the societal sections of the middle-low classes, he created a revolution in local politics. At the same time at the national level, the normalization of military-civil relations, the saving of the Kurdish issue from a language of security, and the removal of democratization from being considered as an exception and thus the restoration of Turkish politics has seen Erdoğan play a big role. These successes and the model that appeared also had the effect of Turkey creating a transformative influence in its region. In a similar manner, Erdoğan's carrying the problems of

Muslim nations who have been marginalized in the international arena and his struggles to bring the international community to a more pluralist-democratic order should not be missed.

Erdoğan's aim of restoring Turkish politics ended with his becoming a presidential candidate. For this transformative project to truly occur, the Turkish political system's most critical office, the presidency, needed to be transformed as well. For this reason, the Kemalist opposition objected strongly to Erdoğan's candidacy. It put forward the arguments that Erdoğan would not be "impartial", that he would drag Turkey towards "authoritarianism". Erdoğan advanced his presidential candidacy with the claim of the "New Turkey" discourse and the procurement of a meeting of the state and the people. The people's support for transformation, continuing from 2002, repeated in the presidential elections and Erdoğan went up to the Çankaya Palace as the 12th President of Turkey.

Among the different typologies of president that have been observed in Turkey, Erdoğan displays the features of the "constructive" president. The most fundamental characteristic that qualifies a constructive president is the filling up of the vacuum created by the end of the struggle with the tutelage by a new institutionalization and the construction of "New Turkey". "New Turkey" reflects Turkey's search for a new subjectivity in the world in the age of globalization. "New Turkey" has three dimensions related to each other. The first dimension is the construction of a post-Kemalist nation that is inclusive and respectful of differences. The second one is the realization of a regional transformation done around the search for a post-Westphalian political unit that strains the borders of the nation-state and which is compatible with the conservative-democrat nation. Lastly, it is the creation of a democrat-pluralist international community that recognizes different civilizations at the global level and gives them a chance to live.

The search for “New Turkey” is a political project the Erdoğan-led AK Party has tried to advance ever since the beginning. What differentiates the stage that has been arrived at is the end of the struggle with the tutelage and, with Erdoğan being elected president, the actualization of this project in a material way and at a much more advanced dimension. But it is indubitable that many challenges will be experienced with each dimension during the formative period. At the national level, solving the Kurdish problem, the pressures that will be caused by the cultural-societal transformation, and the resistance of secular-nationalist and leftist-liberal societal groups who have become introverted and

thus open to international manipulations come to the fore. At the regional level, it is the continuation of the Westphalian nation-state still being the hegemonic discourse and norm, and the fact that Turkey lacks the military, diplomatic, and intelligence tools it needs in order to fulfill its foreign policy ideals. At the global level, it is the attempted drowning out of Turkey’s search for a democratic-pluralist international community by Western hegemonic powers with post-colonial politics and through the liberal tutelage that is imposing its own social ethical-political principles on the non-Western world. The fate of “New Turkey” depends on the extent to which it can respond to these challenges.

If we take a look at the collapse of the Western-centered world in the 1990s one can see the preceding 1945 period and onward as a sign of modern liberal political crisis wrapped around a capitalist versus communist strife which as a result created fault lines in the political atmosphere. The trauma that emerged within the groundwork of modern Turkey in its early days was so engrained that it created many political crises. To this extent the structural breaking points that were experienced in the transitional periods this opportunity laid the foundation for reformist political actors to emerge in the political scene.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was one of the reformist political actors that emerged with breakthrough developmental policies which quickly brought him to the position of one of the most influential leaders to have ever come in the history of modern Turkey. What makes him such an important figure is the fact that he played a major role during the time when Turkey was experiencing a major political crisis and Erdoğan was able to respond with a great restoration plan. This picture reveals that the political role played by Erdoğan is reconstructing the political order in the country.

Erdoğan's leadership within the restoration period represents the struggle with a tutelage regime from the past and on the other hand there is a struggle to rebuild institutions from within politics. As a result of Erdoğan's struggle we witness a centralization of government that is different in the sense that the people and state are brought together on a single platform which has rendered a new path towards democratization. In the same vein, the economic progress made much improvement along the lines towards better development. In tandem to these domestic improvements in Turkey, the country was ushered into the center of international arena as an active player in the field.

Erdoğan's "constructivist" approach to executive power in the presidency will allow new institutions to be established. The "New Turkey" project that is at the center of Erdoğan's reform is comprised of three factors: independence, democracy and development. The two goals aimed at improving the society and its institutions include local values being used to reform and rebuild society from within. At the same time, in order to achieve a democratic pluralist citizenry, it is also necessary for the reformed society to pursue a rectified political agency. These two objectives are inseparable from one another.



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